

to hate and violence, and to change the world for the better.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, in admiration for all you've done to create a world governed by liberty and justice and friendship, I offer a toast to you, to the people of Canada, and to the friendship of our two peoples.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In his remarks, he referred to Sheila Martin, wife

of Prime Minister Martin; former Prime Ministers Jean Chretien and John Napier Turner of Canada; Lt. Gen. E.A. Findley, Canadian Forces, deputy commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Canadian Museum of Civilization is located across the Ottawa River from Ottawa, Ontario. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Martin.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004

November 30, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3936, the "Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004." The Act is designed to strengthen the management and administration of health care facilities and programs for our Nation's veterans.

Section 414(e)(4)(D) of the Act requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) to include, in a written notice of a mission change for any of several departmental medical facilities, an analysis of any alternatives to the mission change proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The executive branch shall construe this provision in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the deliberative processes of the Executive or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

Section 501(c) of the Act purports to require the Secretary to submit to the Congress recommendations for changes in law in certain circumstances. The executive branch shall implement this provision in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
November 30, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 3936, approved November 30, was assigned Public Law No. 108-422. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks in Halifax, Canada
December 1, 2004

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you, and Mrs. Martin, for a fantastic dinner last night in Ottawa. We really loved it. My only regret today is that Laura is not with me. She is—went home to thank those who have been decorating the White House for the great Christmas season that's coming up. I married well. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate the Premiers who are here. Premier Hamm, thank you for your hospitality. Premier Lord, Premier Binns, and Premier Williams, I appreciate you all joining. I want to specifically mention the Premiers because, as an ex-Governor, I feel a special kinship to those who—*[laughter]*—run the Provinces here in Canada. But thank you for your service. Ambassador Cellucci, mayors, local officials, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be with you today to reaffirm America's enduring ties to your country. I am really glad to be in Canada, and I'm really glad to be among friends. I appreciate the warm hospitality we've received.

In the past year, I've come to know your new Prime Minister. We've met in Mexico, in the United States, in Chile, and now in Canada. Paul Martin is a leader who is asserting Canada's good influence in the world. And as I prepare for a second term in office, I look forward to a successful working partnership between our two countries.

Paul and I share a great vision for the future, two prosperous, independent nations joined together by the return of NHL hockey. *[Laughter]* I told Paul that I really have only one regret about this visit to Canada. There's a prominent citizen who endorsed me in the 2000 election, and I wanted a chance to finally thank him for that endorsement. I was hoping to meet Jean Poutine. *[Laughter]*

I'm proud to stand in this historic place, which has welcomed home so many Canadians who defended liberty overseas and where so many new Canadians began their North American dream. I'm grateful for the hospitality shown by the people of this fine city who have been so very kind to Americans before.

Three years ago, Halifax and other towns and villages, from Newfoundland to Manitoba to the Northwest Territories to British Columbia, welcomed, as the Prime Minister mentioned, more than 33,000 passengers on diverted flights. For days after September the 11th, Canadians came to the aid of men and women and children who were worried and confused and had nowhere to sleep. You opened your homes and your churches to strangers. You brought food, you set up clinics, you arranged for calls to their loved ones, and you asked for nothing in return.

One American declared, "My heart is overwhelmed at the outpouring of Canadian compassion. How does a person say thank you to a nation?" Well, that's something a President can do. And so let me say directly to the Canadian people and to all of you here today who welcomed Americans, thank you for your kindness to America in an hour of need.

That emergency revealed the good and generous heart of this country and showed the true feelings of Canadians and Americans toward each other. The affection that appeared in an instant will always be there, and it runs deep. Beyond the words of politicians and the natural disagreements that nations will have, our two peoples are one family and always will be.

We're united in part by the daily contact of commerce, and both our nations are better off for it. In the 10 years since the North American Free Trade Agreement was enacted, trade between the United